



U.S. ARMY

The **Common Driver Trainer**, being developed to train Stryker crews initially, will be reconfigurable to simulate a variety of ground vehicles.



# All systems GO

PEO STRI gets new  
clout in planning  
U.S. Army purchases

By JACK WEIBLE

**T**he U.S. Army is abandoning its long-time policy on how to develop trainers and simulators in favor of a new streamlined system that gives its simulation experts more say.

By involving the Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI) early on in all its training-device decisions, the Army hopes to speed up development, avoid costly duplications and end up with better trainers sooner.

For years the service has divided its training devices into those that support general military training, or "nonsystems," while those meant for use with a specific weapon such as a tank or helicopter are labeled "systems."

Maintaining parallel development tracks for these two types of training programs hasn't always been a model of efficiency, not surprisingly. And because the Army's simulation and training arm, PEO STRI, only oversees "nonsystems," its expertise is excluded from the all-important acquisition and requirements-setting phases of key training devices that the Army categorizes as "systems." Little to no interaction between program ex-

ecutive offices on the two sides has sometimes led to redundancies in technologies and too-slow efforts to field devices at a time when soldiers need the latest tools for a wartime environment.

That is all supposed to change in the months to come following a policy change approved by the Army's acquisition office this winter that grants PEO STRI new authority in the purchase of all training aids, devices, simulators and simulations, or what the service calls TADSS.

"As the U.S. Army's acquisition center of excellence for training and testing enablers, I expect PEO STRI to work with all PEOs and PMs as they ensure effective and cost efficient execution of TADSS acquisition programs," wrote Claude Bolton, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, in a Dec. 11 memo. PEO STRI officials have been at work since then developing the implementation plan that needs to be

approved before the Army begins its annual weapons systems reviews in October.

The goal by autumn, said Joe Giunta, strategic integrator at PEO STRI and leader of the effort to develop the implementation plan, is to have it approved "so that there's a STRI guy sitting with the systems guy at the table" when they meet for those weapons reviews.

PEO STRI will gain significant clout in helping advise on technology for all the systems programs that include aviation, ground vehicles and ground weapons.

"They've been pretty successful at driving common standards across the Army for simulation and training," said John Lenyo, president of CAE USA, who viewed the change as a benefit to industry. "If you buy one system from Company A and one from Company B, they have the potential to talk to each other, to integrate easily and run from the same database."

PEO STRI's involvement with systems PEOs and program managers should lead to similar commonalities in those programs, Lenyo said. "When PEO STRI was not involved in those procurements, you lost that common background."

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**From its Orlando, Fla., headquarters, PEO STRI** will have a hand in the acquisition of all U.S. Army training devices and simulators.

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The policy change promotes interoperability across live, virtual and constructive training and affects the training at all locations, including combat training centers and deployments.

"Candidly, it could have been done a long time ago," said Lt. Gen. Ross Thompson, military deputy at the Army acquisition office "It took a while to get the policy memo with all the right words that everybody could agree to. But I think it's got the right flexibility in it."

Giunta said wording in Bolton's memo makes it clear that systems program managers are to work with PEO STRI. And that is backed by language that says exception to the policy will be granted only when supported by a business case to be presented to the office of the assistant secretary of defense for acquisition, logistics and technology.

"Most of the questions that have surfaced have been 'how are we going to do it,' not if they should do it," he said.

## DEVELOPING A PLAN

For now, Giunta said he and other PEO STRI officials are busy developing integrated product teams to finalize the implementation plan requested by James Blake, director at PEO STRI. Part of that process will be carrying the torch for systems that already share technology as a game plan for the future.

The Common Driver Trainer was cited by both Giunta and Thompson as an example. Giunta said the program manager for the Stryker Driver Trainer worked with PEO STRI to develop the trainer so that software embedded in the devices could be available on future trainers for Bradley fighting vehicles and Abrams tanks. "We're building the Stryker now," Giunta said. "The next time the Abrams refreshes [its technology] it will embed that software."

In the past, having different databases for different systems meant that "every time you made a change, you had to pay for that change multiple times," he said.

The system is a classic example "where you've got all the foundations there for the scenarios, and then they just bolt on and bolt

off the different cab, depending on the type of vehicle used for the Common Drive Trainer," Thompson said.

The PEOs at Ground Combat Systems and Combat Support/Combat Service Support, both located in Detroit, have worked well with PEO STRI, based in Orlando, Fla., to develop the common database on ground vehicle trainers, Giunta said, and the commonality has taken root across the Army, including the National Guard, the G-3 office (operations) and armor schools. "PEO STRI will be a partner in the concept formulation of their training strategy for their training devices," he said.

Giunta said PEO STRI has identified at least 35 systems where it can install the integrated product teams to begin aiding "our sister PEOs in the execution part." Included in that group were the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter, the Improvised Explosive Device Effects Simulator and the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, the planned replacement for the Humvee.

The light tactical vehicle is still just in the development stage, but Giunta said the Army's PEO for combat service support ensured from the beginning that PEO STRI would be involved in the training requirements.

Thompson also cited the Army's massive Future Combat Systems (FCS) as another program where managers have embraced the concept of working with PEO STRI on developing TADSS. The FCS program manager for embedded training works and lives in Orlando, he said, and reports to Maj. Gen. Charles Cartwright, program manager for the full FCS initiative.

"For the future systems, we've already got that relationship in place and FCS uses all the capabilities of PEO STRI to do the planning, the architectural work, et cetera for the embedded training for the FCS systems," Thompson said.

Other systems ripe for the "embedded" approach include aviation platforms that will soon need upgrades for trainers, he added.

## NO ADDED PERSONNEL

For now, PEO STRI will restructure existing resources to handle the extra work, Giunta said, but will wait until after the formal implementation plan is signed off to see whether any extra manpower would be needed. "This is going to take time to implement, so those kinds of major structural impacts may not happen now. They could happen two, three years out," he said.

CAE's Lenyo said time will tell how well PEO STRI handles the extra responsibility. "They would probably be the first to tell you their personnel are busy now," he said. "And most of them don't have the luxury of working one single program. A lot of them are multitasked."

Lenyo said he believes that industry generally is a proponent of the work done at PEO STRI. "It's always been a major driver in how the industry is evolving. They've really increased the speed of acquisition; it doesn't take nearly the time it used to."

Bringing PEO STRI into the planning process for all Army systems is the right move, Lenyo added, though it will not happen overnight. "It's not quite one-stop shopping but it's a lot closer to that. Instead of having to keep your eye on many, many locations, it cuts a few out." That will make it easier for CAE to track where business opportunities lie within the Army in the future, he said.

Jim Craig, vice president of ground, maritime and civil solutions at Lockheed Martin Simulation, Training & Support, said in a statement the policy change "should make it easier to do business because all requirements will be funneled through a central U.S. Army entity. Even more importantly, the proposed collaboration should ensure that critical simulation and training requirements are identified, addressed and delivered to soldiers more quickly."

## ON THE FAST TRACK

The Army regulation that has guided non-systems is being rewritten to recognize the new policy, Giunta said, and the one that guides systems training devices will also be reworked. He said there is a certain pressure — "a two- to three-year window" — to get the wheels in motion so that systems PEOs and

program managers look at PEO STRI in their planning processes for TADSS as a routine matter instead of an extra requirement. That means developing the implementation plan correctly and quickly; otherwise, soldiers will revert to the mind-set of the two existing regulations, he said.

The training and simulation industry can only benefit under the new policy, Giunta said. PEO STRI's center of excellence in Orlando, where most of the major companies have offices, should see a heightened partnership with industry. "If we can bring more system work to the

PEO, or at least the concept formulation of those devices, that gives them a better chance to gain opportunity," he said.

Thompson said of the flurry of activity, "It's absolutely the right thing to do. It's a long time in coming to get to this point. I'm fairly certain the implementation is going to go smoothly and I don't see any resistance out there from the PEOs I've talked to." The bottom line will be quicker fielding of systems for soldiers at war and a safer environment.

"We're looking forward to putting the pieces in place," Thompson said. ■

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PRESIDENT, CAE USA